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SEPTEMBER WEATHER AND CROPS

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered through WRC and 43 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, October 7, 1931, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour.

Well, folks, it appears that the summer of 1931, like the depression, is loath to leave us. The month of September had summerlike warmth everywhere east of the Rocky Mountains, except in some extreme southern and extreme northeastern localities where the temperatures averaged near normal. In other States they were 4° to 10° higher than normal, with the area between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains having the relatively warmest weather. Previous maximum temperature records for this month were equalled or exceeded in many localities in the northern half of the country, with a record high of 104° reported as far north as Minneapolis. When the entire country is considered, it was the warmest September of record. Other notably warm September occurred in 1897, 1902, and 1927.

In fact, the weather, so far this year, has been decidedly abnormal with regard to warmth. January, February, June, July and September were markedly warm throughout practically the entire country, and the only months decidedly cool over extended areas were March and May; the other two, April and August, had, in general, close to normal warmth. In looking up the records for this year, from the first of January to the first of October, we find that the period has been unusually warm practically every where, except in the more southern districts where the temperature averages for the nine months were slightly lower than usual. The Northern States show the greatest departures from normal, culminating in the area between the Lake region and Rocky Mountains where the temperature has averaged from 5° to more than 7° a day higher than normal since the first of January. There has been a decided tendency in the United States to warmer than normal weather for more than ten years.

With regard to rainfall for September there were marked contrasts between the North and the South. The Central-Northern States, where the summer was extremely dry, had generous to heavy September rains. In fact, from the Ohio and Missouri Rivers northward to the Canadian boundary, there was generally more than normal--Iowa, for example, had nearly twice the usual amount of rain for September, but it was the first month in ten with excessive moisture. On the other hand, there was very little rainfall in the Southern States and the western Great Plains. A large area comprising the lower Mississippi Valley and some adjoining districts had less than 25 per cent of normal, and there were like deficiencies in parts of the south Atlantic area, and much of the Southwest.

When we consider September weather in relation to agriculture, there were some decidedly favorable features and some unfavorable. The rains from the Ohio Valley northward and northwestward materially improved gardens and late pastures rather generally, and were favorable for seeding fall grains. The abnormal warmth matured corn rapidly, removing it from danger of frost unusually early and the close of the month found the crop practically all safe. Other fall crops ripened fast and threshing small grains made good progress in the later districts. Notwithstanding the lateness of the season, the northern rains and warm weather revived pastures and some important

districts now have the best grazing of the season. The western Great Plains and the entire south, however, were unfavorably dry.

With regard to the past week, a continuation of summerlike warmth and rather general absence of rainfall made nearly ideal conditions for seasonal farm work, except for plowing in some areas where it is still too dry. The present situation with regard to soil moisture shows decided contrasts in different sections of the country, especially between the North and the South, with the exception of some local dryness in the immediate Ohio Valley, a large area, comprising the Central-Northern States, extending from Kentucky, Missouri, and the eastern half of Kansas northward, has sufficient moisture for present needs. In some southern parts of this area, however, pasture lands need more rain, and in portions of Kentucky, southern Indiana, and southern Illinois moisture is desired for plowing. In general, this entire area is in satisfactory condition as regards the weather factor.

The Southern States are in a very much less favorable situation. September was extremely dry and mostly warm, and the past week practically rainless, except in a few localities. Moisture is badly needed nearly everywhere for late crops, pastures, and plowing. The Atlantic Coast States are also beginning to need rain, as a general rule, but less acutely.

It is still too dry for winter wheat seeding in western Kansas and most of the Southwest, especially in Oklahoma where planting in dry soil continues. Moisture is also needed in scattered areas of Nebraska and the Dakotas, as well as in the Pacific Northwest. In other winter wheat sections conditions are mostly favorable.

In the South, the warm dry weather opened cotton bolls unusually fast, but progress of harvest did not keep pace. Picking advanced well in some sections, but, despite the unusually favorable weather, harvest was rather slow in a great many other places, principally because of economic conditions.